

NORTH CAROLINA'S RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION

QUICK FACTS ABOUT NORTH CAROLINA'S RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

Source of Funds:	Funding Uncertain Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (Funding authorized 2005 through 2009) Congress is considering reauthorization of this program as of October 30, 2010
Anticipated RTP Annual Amount:	Approximately \$1.6 Million
Permissible Uses:	New Trail Construction Trail Renovation Trail Side Facilities Land Acquisition (Willing Sellers Only)
Grants Available to:	Governmental Agencies Non-profit Organizations
Maximum Grant Amount:	\$75,000
Grants Awarded in 2009:	16 Applicants Funded Totaling \$1.1 million
Number of Applications Received:	41 Applications Totaling \$2.5 million
Application Cycle:	Applications Available November 1, 2009 Application Deadline January 29, 2010
Match Requirement:	RTP Requires a 25% Match of RTP Funds Received (Cash and/or In-kind Services)
Contact:	Contact your Regional Trails Specialist or Grants Manager
Contact List:	http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_contacts.php

FEDERAL ENABLING LEGISLATION - RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The RTP is a federal grant program authorized by Congress in 2005 as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). This authorization provided funding for the RTP through the 2009 fiscal year.

Congress must reauthorize the RTP for this program to continue. Funding for future years is being considered by Congress at this time.

The intent of the RTP is to help fund trails and trail-related recreational needs at the State level. Funding for the RTP comes from federal gas taxes paid on non-highway fuel used in off-highway vehicles, and the program is administered at the Federal level by the Federal Highway Administration. At the State level, the Secretary of the DENR has assigned that responsibility to the Division of Parks and Recreation and its State Trails Program. The North Carolina Trails Committee is a seven-member advisory committee who will review all applications and make recommendations for funding. The Secretary of DENR has the final approval authority for North Carolina.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION/RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM WEBSITE AND PROGRAM INFORMATION

For more information about the Recreational Trails Program, visit the Federal Highways Administration's website: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/index.htm>. This site includes information including: enabling legislation, program guidelines, and information about funding authorization.

FEDERAL DEFINITION OF TRAIL

Section 206 of the Recreational Trails Program Legislation provides the following definitions for Motorized Recreation and Recreational Trail:

MOTORIZED RECREATION --The term "motorized recreation" means off-road recreation using any motor-powered vehicle, except for a motorized wheelchair.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL --The term "recreational trail" means a thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as:

- pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use
- skating or skateboarding
- equestrian activities, including carriage driving
- non-motorized snow trail activities, including skiing
- bicycling or use of other human powered vehicles
- aquatic or water activities

- and motorized vehicular activities, including all terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles

PERMITTED USES OF RTP GRANT FUNDS

- Development of urban trail linkages
- Maintenance of existing recreational trails
- Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails and back country terrain
- Development of trail-side and trail-head facilities *limited to* drinking water fountains, restroom facilities, safety rails, signs, benches, and vehicle parking areas
- Provision of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities
- Acquisition of easements for trails
- Acquisition of fee-simple title to property from a willing seller, when the objective of the acquisition cannot be accomplished by acquisition of an easement or by other means

***Note:** RTP guidance prohibits condemnation of any kind of interest in property and you must follow the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 – 49 CFR Part 24*

- Construction of new trails on state, county, municipal, or conveyed easements across private lands, where a recreational need for such construction is shown
- Construction of new trails crossing federal lands, where such construction is approved by the administering agency charged with management of all impacted lands
- Design, engineering and environmental compliance study costs of up to 10% of any RTP grant award
- Acquisition of trail construction and maintenance tools and/or equipment (\$500.00 maximum per unit established by North Carolina).
- Rental of trail construction and maintenance tools and equipment

NON-PERMITTED USES OF RTP GRANT FUNDS

- Trail brochures and maps
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Construction of any recreational trail on National Forest System lands for motorized uses

unless such lands (other than wilderness areas) are otherwise consistent with the management direction in such approved land and resource management plan

- Upgrading, expanding or otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to trails predominantly used by non-motorized trail users, and on which, as of May 1, 1991, motorized use is either prohibited or has not occurred
- Feasibility Studies
- Law Enforcement
- Railroads
- Roads
- Sidewalks
- Wilderness areas
- Construction of any recreational trail on Bureau of Land Management land for any motorized use unless the land has been designated for uses other than wilderness by an approved BLM resource management plan or has been released to uses other than wilderness by an Act of Congress; and the construction is otherwise consistent with the management direction in the approved management plan

FEDERAL RTP ALLOCATION REQUIREMENTS

30% Reserved for Motorized Trails

Not less than 30% of the State's allocation must be reserved for uses relating to motorized recreation. This includes motorized single use projects and motorized diverse use projects.

30% Reserved for Non-Motorized Trails

Not less than 30% of the State's allocation will be reserved for uses relating to non-motorized recreation. This includes non-motorized projects for a single use and non-motorized diverse use projects.

40% Diverse Use Projects

40% of the State's allocation is discretionary funding, but preference will be given to projects with the greatest number of compatible recreational purposes or that provide for innovative recreational trail corridor sharing to accommodate motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use.

FEDERAL MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The Federal RTP is a 75/25 matching grant program. For every RTP dollar received, the grantee must provide the required 25% match. This 25% match must come from a **non-FHWA** source in the form of cash, donated services or materials or the value of acquired, or donated land for this specific trail project.

APPROVED IN-KIND MATCH ALLOWANCES

RTP applicants are allowed to use in-kind services as all or some portion of their required 25% match. The services provided must be performed to help with or in support of the project that will be accomplished with approved RTP grant funds. Allowable in-kind services are:

- General Volunteer Labor – Valued at \$9.00 per hour based on comparable wages as listed on the U.S. Department of Labor’s website.
- Volunteered Trail Construction and Maintenance Supervision – Valued at \$12.00 per hour based on comparable wages as listed on the U.S. Department of Labor’s website.
- Volunteered Excavating and Loading Equipment Operators – Valued at \$14.00 per hour based on comparable wages as listed on the U.S. Department of Labor’s website.
- Volunteered Specialized Services such as carpenters, mason, etc. – We will accept a statement of fair market value from the person or persons providing this service to a grantee – pending that the value assigned is within reason.
- Value of Donated Equipment and Operator - We will accept a statement of fair market value from the person or persons providing this service to a grantee – pending that the value assigned is within reason.
- Value Donated Materials – We will accept a statement of fair market value of any materials from the person or persons donating the materials – pending that the value assigned is within reason.
- Value of Pre-Approved Project Planning and Environmental Compliance Costs – We will accept project specific planning and environmental compliance costs. ***These costs are limited to costs incurred less than 18 months prior to the date RTP contract awarded, or after the grant contract document is fully executed.***
- Value of Land Acquired for this Trail Project – We will accept the appraised value of property acquired by the grantee. ***The acquisition of land must have taken place less than 18 months prior to the date RTP contract awarded, or after the grant contract document is fully executed.***

STATE RTP REQUIREMENTS

RTP Project Lands

North Carolina will award RTP grants to projects that are:

- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a governmental agency provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands owned in fee simple or easements that are held in perpetuity by a non-profit organization provided that the public is allowed use of the trail or facilities.
- On lands that are leased by a governmental agency or non-profit organization for a minimum of 10 years.

Note: These are listed in priority order for evaluation and funding recommendations.

Reimbursement Grant Program

The GRANTEE must finance 100% of the project costs. All eligible, incurred and documented expenditures will be refunded to the grantee, up to 90% of the total **RTP award amount**. The last 10% will be withheld until the project is complete, all records submitted, and a final site inspection has been completed. When all requirements have been met, the final 10% will be reimbursed.

Note: You must complete at least one of your defined project deliverables in order to request any reimbursement.

One Grant Per Agency

Only one grant will be awarded to a managing agency should sufficient applications be submitted to enable total allocation of RTP funds. This will help insure statewide distribution of funding. (For the purposes of this grant, a U.S. Forest Service District or a State Park is considered a managing agency.)

RTP APPLICATION REVIEW, SCORING AND APPROVAL PROCESS

Review of Application

All applications received on or before the application deadline will be reviewed by the appropriate Regional Trails Specialist to insure that an applicant has provided all required documentation.

The Regional Trails Specialist will assist applicants, if needed, to modify or correct your application.

Application Scoring Criteria

All applications will be scored using the RTP Scoring Criteria listed below:

1. Ownership and management of land and/or trail project:
 - a. Government Agency 4
 - b. Non-Profit Organization 2
 2. Trail Project to accomplish:
 - a. New Trail Construction 5
 - b. Trail renovation or restoration 4
 - c. Trail-side facilities 3
 - d. Land acquisition 1
- Note:** An application requesting a combination of the above will be scored based upon the highest percentage of expenditures as noted in the project deliverable section of this application. Only deliverables that are funded with RTP funds will be considered.
3. Project provides linkage:
 - a. State Trail Project 5
 - b. National Trail Project 4
 - c. Regional Trail Project 3
 - d. Joint City/County, County/County Trail Project 2
 - e. Local Trail Project 1
 - f. Park specific 0
 4. Responsible Management Agency:
 - a. Governmental Agency 3
 - b. Governmental Agency /NPO/Volunteers 2
 - c. NPO only 1
 5. The trail will be open to the public:
 - a. Open 7 days per week 3
 - b. Open limited hours per week 1

The point values will be totaled and the applications ranked according to score from high to low. This RTP Scoring Criteria will be used to initially evaluate and rank all applications received. Other funding criteria include: regional distribution of grant awards; and consideration of funding of projects that serve all trail user types.

North Carolina Trails Committee Review and Funding Recommendations

It is a duty of the North Carolina Trails Committee to review all applications received and to make RTP grant funding recommendations to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, who is authorized to award RTP grants.

The North Carolina Trails Committee will consider the following factors when making their RTP grant funding recommendations:

1. The score awarded to each applicant
2. The required:
 - 30% to Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Projects
 - 30% to Non-Motorized Trail Projects
 - 40% to Diverse/Multiuse Trail Projects
3. Regional distribution of funds
4. Projects that serve all trail user types

Compliance with Environmental and Historical Rules and Regulations

All applications recommended for funding by the North Carolina Trails Committee will be forwarded for review by the Federal Highway Administration and the State of North Carolina for compliance with state and federal environmental and historical rules and regulations. Only grant applications that are found to be in compliance with these rules and regulations are eligible for RTP grant funding.

Notification of Grant Award

The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will send letters of award to applicants. This letter is simply notification that you have been awarded a RTP grant and that your application has now been forwarded to the Division of Purchase and Services for the award of a State Grant Contract.

Only after you have a fully executed copy of this grant contract can you begin work on your specific project for which you want reimbursement.

Award of State Grant Contracts

The Division of Purchase and Services is responsible for issuing State Grant Contracts. You will receive 4 paper copies of your State Grant Contract. These 4 copies are to be signed and returned to the Division of Purchase and Services for their signature.

Only after you have a fully executed copy of this grant contract can you begin work on your specific project for which you want reimbursement.

APPLICATION AND APPROVAL TIMELINE

Application Deadline – January 29, 2010

All electronic .pdf applications submitted by email before 11:59 p.m. on January 29, 2009 or mailed paper applications postmarked on or before Friday, January 29, 2010, will first be reviewed and evaluated by State Trails Program staff.

Application Review and Recommendation Meeting – April 2010

The North Carolina Trails Committee will meet in April to review all project descriptions and make final funding recommendations to the Secretary of DENR.

Environmental and Historical Reviews – May 2010

Grantee applications recommended for funding will be forwarded for review by the DPR Resource Management Section for compliance with the State's Environmental Protection Act; the FHWA for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; and, the State Historic Preservation Office for compliance with the State Historic Preservation Act. This review process can take eight weeks or longer. Tentative clearance date is July 2010.

Secretary's Award Letter – July 2010

Applications found in compliance with environmental and historical reviews will be forwarded to the Secretary of DENR for review and approval. Grantees whose projects are selected for funding can expect an award letter from the Secretary in July 2010.

***Note:** This letter will be notification that your application has been approved for funding. A contract must be fully executed between the State and the Grantee before you are authorized to expend funds that you will want to be reimbursed as a part of this RTP Grant.*

Award of Contract – October 2010

All applications approved for funding (pending compliance with State and Federal environmental and historical rules and regulations) will be sent to the Division of Purchase and Services who will execute the individual grant contracts for signature. Contracts must be fully executed by all parties prior to expending any funds you will want to have reimbursed from 2010 RTP Funds. This process can take up to eight weeks to complete. Tentative date for issuance of contracts is October 2010.

STATE GRANT CONTRACT START AND END DATES

The State Grant Contract provides a grantee a start and ending date for a grant project.

The State will not reimburse a grantee for any project expenditures that are dated prior to the start date or after the contract ending date as noted in the contract document.

State Grant Contracts for RTP grants provide the grantee two (2) years to complete the project. A grantee may request up to a one year extension given sufficient reason.

2009 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANTS AWARDED

Click on the following link to download a listing of all applications received, a brief project description and amount of RTP grant award. ????????